



'Jalapanvidhi': Efficacy of Water for Vigor

-Dr. Manoja Joshi

Assistant Professor, Department of Ayurved and Yog,
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Mukund Nagar, Pune-37.

Email Id: drmanojajoshi@gmail.com

Abstract:

Water is an important component of every living cell. It is a solvent medium and reactant for various chemical reactions inside the cell. Ayurveda comprises of comprehensive references for water consumption, its storage, its purification, its relation with meal and various seasons. This manuscript focuses on many such unnoticed elements about water consumption for a healthy life. Ayurved classical texts are manually searched for principles regarding water and its various aspects. The references of valuable principles are collected and translated for this research. They are categorized and tabulated in present study.

Key words: Jalam, Water Consumption, Ayurveda, sources of water, storage containers, hot water, wood.

1. Introduction

Water is important for human life. Human body is made up of 70% of water. It is a vital nutrient and has numerous critical roles to play in the human body. It acts as a building material; as a solvent, as a reaction medium, reactant and reaction product; as a carrier for nutrients and waste products; in thermoregulation; as a lubricant and the shock absorber¹.

Ayurveda considers water as an elixir of life. Ayurveda, one of the most ancient traditional system of medicine states that, water is the endorser of life which plays an important role in attaining vigor. It is one of the most important entities which give soothing effect²

Traditional Ayurved scholars have given a deep thought to water and detailed references are available regarding the mode of its uses, its storage, properties of various types of water and principles of water consumption. The present study undertakes to unveil such unnoticed aspects regarding water.

Water or Jal is the third important entity among Panchamahabhoota (five important element of nature). It is described in detail in ancient classics like *Vedas* and *Upanishads*.

Though water is an inevitable part of life, not much attention is paid towards principles of water consumption. Appropriate use of water as per the directions given by the Ayurved classics can bestow us with complete health and wellness.

2. Methodology-

For this manuscript a handpicked method was adopted to review Ayurved classics. The major compendium of Ayurveda, such as *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Nighantu* and *Bhojankutuhalam*- a text for Indian dietetics, were thoroughly checked and reviewed to pick up various aspects of water. It includes importance of water, types of water, relation of water intake with meals and its seasonal variation, dietetic uses of water and indications-contraindications of water consumption.

All the relevant literature (Ayurveda classics and research papers) is collected and principles having the practical utility are incorporated in this present manuscript. Key words includes the following: water intake & health, effect on health, seasonal variation and water, hot water drinking, excess water intake, medicated water, indications and contraindications of water.

3. Review and Discussion

In Ayurved, water is considered as *Jevanam* or the most vital element for sustenance of life life.

3.1. Principles of Water Intake

a. *Ushahpanam*: (Drinking of water in the early morning) (3)

This is one of the important directions given, according to which drinking of water just before sunrise is beneficial for health. One should drink 8 *Prasruti* (768 ml) of water at the end of the 4th *prahar* of night, just prior to sunrise. The one who makes it a habit of drinking water in this manner, is bestowed with life of 100 years and gets free from diseases like hemorrhoids irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fever, skin disease, obesity, urinary obstruction, headache, throat, eye and ear disorders and many diseases of *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Pitta*.

b. *Hansodaka*⁴-

The water in the *Sharad ritu* or in the Autumn Season is known as *Hansodaka*. Autumn season follows rainy season. The climate observes a significant change from rainy clouds to the bright sun light. The abundant moon light in this season enters the water in the night. The superior surface remains undisturbed as rain fall is stopped and due to the action of sunlight and

moon, water gets purified. This purest water is known as *Hansodaka*. In this season, the natural reservoirs of water get purified.

c. Water Consumption and Seasonal Variations:

In *Varsha ritu*, i.e. Rainy season, water of rain which is collected in clean vessel or water from *Kaupa* (deep well) should be used for drinking. Due to rain, the rivers and other water sources get contaminated with organic and inorganic pollutants. Hence boiled and cooled water should be used.

Ground water is comparatively free from pollutants and has certain advantages over the surface water which are as under -

1. Ground water usually contains no suspended matter.
2. Ground water, very rarely contains pathogenic bacteria; generally it contains microorganisms native to the formation, unless contaminated by human activity.⁵
3. Groundwater is clear and colorless unless tainted with humic material.
4. The temperature of groundwater is relatively constant and is equivalent to, or greater than, the mean air temperature above the land surface. Temperatures can be altered by human influence.⁶

A pure form of honey should be added to drinking water as it helps to reduce the moisture (*Kleda*) formation in *dhatu*s.

In *Hemant* and *Shishira ritu*,(Winter season), warm water is preferable for use during daily activities as well as for drinking.

In *Grishma ritu*, (Summer season),cool water is preferable.

In *Sharad ritu*, *Hansodaka* or the naturally purified water is used.⁷

In Autumn, all water bodies naturally get purified and hence, all types of water can be used.

In Early winter or *Hemant ritu*, *saras* or *tadag* or lake water can be used.

In Spring and Summer seasons, water from deep and narrow well known as *kaupa* can be used. Water obtained from waterfall can also be used.

In early Rainy season water from shallow well or *chautya* can be used.⁽⁸⁾

d. Water and Meals⁹:

One should sip the water during meals. It helps the process of digestion and maintains health. The digestion of food is affected when excessive water is consumed after meal. One who

habitually drinks water after meal renders obese stature.. One who drinks plenty of water before food renders a thin stature Hence, one must drink a small amount of water at frequent intervals during meals in order to stimulate digestive fire (*Bhojankutuhalam*, Eng version pp 322-323).

It is considered that those who drink appropriate quantity of water in the middle of the meal are often healthy and of normal weight., those who drink water at the end of the meal are overweight or obese and those who drink water in the beginning / prior to meals are very lean in built. A healthy, normal weight person should ideally consume food to fill half of the stomach cavity, one fourth with water and the remaining quarter should be kept vacant.

Warm water acts as a medicine in case of indigestion. Water when consumed after complete digestion of food, imparts health and gives strength to digestive fire.

One who fills the mouth with water and rinses the eyes with water, thrice a day, will never suffer from any eye disorder.

e. Relation of Water with *Desha*(geographical conditions):¹⁰

In *Jangal desh*-*Jangal* is area with fewer trees and less natural water reservoirs. They are arid or semi-arid areas. Water from this area is called *jangala* water. It is dry, salty, light to digest, and it improves digestive fire. It also alleviates *kapha dosha* and is beneficial in many diseases.

In *Anoop desha*- Geographical area with dense forest and plenty of natural water reservoirs is known as *Anoop desha*. People in this specific geographical area exhibit the symptoms of *vata-kapha dosha* dominant diseases.

Water in this region obstructs the channels. It is sweet, heavy to digest, it aggravates *kaph dosha* and slower the digestion.

In *Sadharana desha*- Geographical area with mixed features of both *jangal* and *anoop* areas is called as *Saadhaaran*, and water is called *saadhaaran jala*. It is sweet, cold, satiating, triggers digestive fire and is light to digest. It pacifies thirst and burning sensation.

f. Types of water-

Water has sweet test and is cold in potency. *Antariksha jal* (rain water which is proceeding from clouds in atmosphere) is of indistinct taste, it is nectar like, vitalizing, satiating, sustaining, assuring and reduces fatigue, thirst, fainting, drowsiness, sleep and burning sensations¹¹

Types of water are described in detail according to its sources. Rain water acquires the properties of the soil it gets contacted with as well as according to the climatic conditions¹².

Rain water is of two types, Gangetic and Oceanic.¹³

In the month of *Ashvin*, rain water is clear. It does not get contaminated by environmental dust or toxins hence it is pure and is called as *Ganga Jala*.

In the months of September and October, Indies is at the tail end of rainy season. The rain is not heavy and there is plenty of pleasant sunshine and hot temperature. Hence the chances of mixing impurities and toxins are low in remote or rural areas with low air pollution. Today, though in metro cities, with intense industrialization and dense population, it is hardly possible to get purest form of rain water, but the concept of *Ganga Jal* or purest form of rain water can be accomplished in remote places.

This pure water should be collected and stored in either of the Golden, Silver, Copper or Clay vessel so that its properties can be conserved.

Types of Water according to natural reservoirs.¹⁴

In the absence or unavailability of rain water, Bhauma or ground water can be used.

1.Nadeya

The water of river is known as *Nadeya*. It has properties like non obstructing the channeles, light to digest, aggrevates vata dosha, *katu rasa*-bitter in taste, pacifies kapha and pitta dosha.

2. Kaupa

Water stored in deep but narrow rounded reservoir of water, rounded well or cistern is known as *Kaupya*. It exhibits sweet taste and aggravates kapha dosha. It contains many minerals. (Scholars of CTF, editor, Bhojankutuhalam, by Raghunath Ganesh Navahasta, Jalaprakaranam,Pg no 312 I-AIM,banglore,2012)

3. Saras

It is a pond which is collection of river water flowing from the hilltop. It contains lotuses and the water is not used for domestic purpose. It gives strength and is sweet in taste, light to digest, dry, astringent and causes constipation.

(Dr. P.V.Sharma,editor,sushrut samhita of acharya sushrut , sutrastanam,chapter 45,verse 7,oriental publishers,Varanasi,1999,)

Saras can be compared with ox bow lake, fresh water lake.

4. Tadag

It is a large and long standing water body, and its water is used for domestic purpose .

The water is sweet and astringent. It increases vata and causes constipation,

Tadaga can be compared with Tectonic lakes or glacial lakes.

Tectonic Lakes are formed by large-scale crustal movements separating water bodies from the sea, e.g., Lake *Tso Moriri* and *Pangong Tso* in *Ladakh*.

Glacial lakes are formed in ice-scraped rock basins

5. Prasravanam- It is a type of waterfall in which water flows down from the hills or mountains.

6. Audbhidam - It is a ground water which flows out with great force. It is cool in nature, alleviates pitta, sweet in taste and gives strength .

7. Choundyam-Water stored in naturally formed chasm. It stimulates the digestive fire, aggravates kapha. It is light to digest and imparts taste.

It can be compared with the lakes formed by earth's movement, like Tectonic Lake of Rift valley Lake.or with the lakes formed due to erosion of surface and deposition.

g. Properties of water

Properties of boiled and cooled water¹⁵ -Water which is boiled and reduced to one fourth of its quantity is beneficial in curing the disease caused by vitiation of *vata dosha*. Hence such type of water should be consumed in Hemant ritu or in winter season to avoid accumulation of vata due to seasonal variations.

Water which is boiled and reduced to half of its quantity alleviates vata and pitta. Such type of water should be consumed in the Rainy season, Spring, winter and summer season.. The water which is reduced to three fourth of its quantity, alleviates all the three dosha. Such type of water should be consumed in Sharad ritu or Autumn season.

Such boiled and cooled water should be consumed in vitiation of blood, vomiting, diabetes, poisoning, constipation, and chronic intermittent fever with malaise.

Properties of Hot water¹⁶

Hot water consumed at night overcomes flatulence, alleviates kapha, treats loss of taste, promotes digestion and stimulates digestive fire.

Properties of hot water according to the wood used for heating-

- Water heated by using firewood of Erand (*Ricinus communis*) alleviates pitta.
- Water heated by using firewood of Bhallataka (*Semecarpus anacardium*) alleviates vata and kapha, enhances vitality and increases virility.

- Water heated by using firewood of Palash (*Butea monosperma*) and Audumber (*Ficus racemosa*) heals wounds, treats itching, promotes physical strength and virility,
- Water heated by using firewood of jambu (*Syzygium cumini*) vata (*Ficus benghalensis*) amra, (*Mangifera indica*) enhances intellectual capacity and physical strength, alleviates dosha.
- Water heated by using firewood of badari (*Zizyphus jujube*) decreases kapha.
- Water heated by using firewood of khadir (*Acacia catechu*) treats bleeding disorders, nourishes dhatus. Consumption of this type of water is preferred in the Summer Season.
- Water heated by using firewood of Kadamba (*Neolamarckia cadamba*) and nimbi (*Azadirachta indica*) treats itching and bleeding disorders.
- Water heated by using firewood of amalaki (*Phyllanthus emblica*) and daru (*Cedrus Deodara*) acts as Rasayan and alleviates vata and pitta.
- Water (kaupa jala) heated by using firewood of pushkar (*Inula racemosa*.) acts as Rasayan and alleviates vata and pitta.
- Water heated by using firewood of karkandhu (*Zizyphus mauritiana*) and daru (*Cedrus Deodara*) weakens the digestive fire.
- Water heated by using firewood of sallaki (*Boswellia serrata*) aggravates many diseases.

Cold water

Cold water should be consumed in the diseases like syncope, burning sensations, giddiness, vomiting, over exertion and bleeding disorders.

Cold water should not be consumed in conditions like pain in loin, rhinitis, vitiation of vata, acute fever, hiccup .

Cooling measures described in sushrut Samhita¹⁷

Pravatsthapanam-Keeping in open air

Udakprakshepanam-Addition of cold water

Yashtikabhramanam-Stirring with a stick

Vyanjanam-fanning

Straining –straining through cloth.

Valukaprakshepanam-keeping on stand

Shikyavalambanam- suspending on swing

Benefits-,relation with ritu and dosha

h. Properties of Water stored in Various Containers¹⁸

One should drink the water made fragrant by immersing flowers in the water kept in the glasses of gold, silver, copper, bronze or precious stones.(P.V. Sharma,sushrut samhita, sutrasthanam,vol 1,chapter 45,verse 13,page.418,oriental publishers,Varanasi,1999)

- Water stored in golden vessel exhibits cooling, soothing effect; it is easier to digest and turns into sweet taste after its metabolism according to Ayurved. It pacifies all the three *doshas*; promotes vitality, strength and intellect as well.
- When it is stored in a Tin vessel, it is sweet, cooling and stimulates digestive fire, increases fecal weight and quantity and aggravates *vata*.
- Water stored in a bronze vessel is very hot in potency; heavy to digest and is turns into pungent taste after its metabolism. It aggravates *pitta* and *kapha*.
- Water stored in Copper vessels is hot in potency, flavorful, pungent, stimulates digestive fire.
- Water stored in a Brass utensil is pungent and is hot in potency. It aggravates *pitta*, alleviates *kapha* and promotes *prameha*.
- Water stored in an Iron vessel is very dry and it treats bleeding disorders and dermatitis.
- Water when stored in clay vessel and is heated in the same vessel, turns suitable for body cleansing and promotes vitality and strength.

(Ideally water should be stored in a copper vessel or it can be stored in an earthen pot or a pot of crystal or quartz or a pot made up from cat's eye gem. (*lahasuniya*). (shri brahmashanlar mishra,editor,bhavprakash, part I ,dinacharya ,verse 128,chaukhamba Sanskrit sansthan,Varanasi,1999.)

I .Storage of water¹⁹ - It is necessary to store the water carefully to avoid any contamination. Acharya Sushrut describes the special types of stands for placing the water containers. They are-

- 1.Phalak-wood plank
- 2.Tryashtak-tripod with octagonal top.
- 3.Circular stand made from Munja-a special grass
- 4.Udakamanchika-raised platform for water vessel made from cane,bamboo.
- 5.Shikya-swing made of rope.

j. Water purification methods.²⁰

Ayurved, the oldest health caring system prescribes various rules for drinking water. Agnivesha compared water to nectar or vital breath, Sushruta Samhita, one of the Ayurved classics has talked about method for purification of water by use of the below mentioned flowers :

1. *Utpala (Nelumbo nucifera)*

2 *Naga (Mesua ferrea)*

3 *Champaka (Michelia champaca)* and

4 *Patala (Stereospermum suaveolens)*

Conclusion-

Ayurveda as a life science considers water as an elixir of life. It gives a comprehensive description of the term water. It enlightens about almost every aspect of water which is very important in present era also. Knowing about the effect of container used for storage of water is also very much essential for health maintenance and well being of human. The thorough and deep study of water purification methods can be beneficial to society. Properties of boiled water have very good practical applicability if properly practiced. Thus the study has focused many new and unnoticed aspect of water through the lens of Ayurveda.

Type of water	Origin	Properties
1. Nadeya	water of river	<i>katu rasa</i> -bitter in taste .pacifies kapha and pitta
2. Kaupa	narrow rounded deep reservoir of water	Sweet taste, Agrevates kapha dosha
3. Saras	of river water flowing from hilltop	Gives strength, sweet in taste, and light to digest, dry, and astringent ,causes constipation .
4. Tadag	large and long standing water body pond	Sweet, astringent, increases vata,causes constipation

5. <i>Prasravanam</i>	waterfall	Light to digest
6. <i>Audbhidam</i>	ground water which flows out with great force	Alleviates pitta,sweet in taste,gives strength
7. <i>Choundyam-</i>	naturally formed chasm	Stimulates digestive fire, grevates kapha, light to digest imparts taste.

Sr No	Type of container	Effect
1	golden vessel	Pacifies all the three <i>doshas</i> ; promotes vitality, strength and intellect
2	tin vessels	Stimulates digestive fire, increases fecal weight and quantity and aggravates <i>vata</i> .
3	bronze vessel	It aggravates <i>pitta</i> and <i>kapha</i> .
4	copper vessels	Stimulates digestive fire.
5	brass	Aggravates <i>pitta</i> , alliviets <i>kapha</i>
6	in iron vessel	Treats bleeding disorders and dermatitis.
7	Clay pot	Body cleansing; promote vitality and strength.

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